(c) whether it is also a fact that wildlife is falling prey to hunger in the State; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) As reported by the State Government 64 cases of leopard deaths have been recorded in Uttaranchal since November, 2000 for various reasons *i.e.* poaching, accidents involving motor vehicles, natural deaths, including those killed in self defence. etc.

(c) and (d) Due to inadequate prey base, leopards are tempted to resort to killing of livestock and sometimes human beings. This has exposed leopards to retaliatory killings. Central Government provides 100% funding to the State Governments for making *ex-gratia* payment in cases of human death and permanent incapacitation and compensation for live stock killed by the leopard.

Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary as Project Tiger Reserve

1816. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Orissa Government has submitted a detailed proposal for inclusion of Sunabeda wildife Sanctuary as a Project Tiger Reserve;

(b) if so, the progress in the matter, so far; and

(c) by when a decision in the matter is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Although no formal proposal for declaring Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve has been received, letters to this effect have been received from the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State.

(b) and (c) Declaration of any areas as a Tiger Reserve needs indepth assessment of the area with regard to the status of *flora and fauna*, potential threats and possibilities of mitigating the threats. This process can start in respect of Sunabeda Sanctuary only after the receipt of detailed proposals.